**Minchinhampton Primary Academy**

**Newsletter No 19 22nd July 2016**

Dear Parents/ Carers

Another year over and another Year 6 group off and away and what a lovely, smiling, characterful bunch they have been. We wish them all well for the future and hope that they at least deign to say hello to us from time to time.

This year we (or at least I and most of we) have decided that we will not allow ourselves to be pre-occupied by Ofsted anymore and not because we find fault with Ofsted as a process per se but because, if you are not careful, it becomes an unhealthy and potentially unhelpful preoccupation. I sometimes sit in heads meetings and the first hour and a half can be devoted to ‘what Ofsted might think of you if…’ and I sit there thinking – ‘gosh how did it come to this?...Is this the reason we went into teaching?’ I hope you, as parents, can all work out for yourselves why teachers go into teaching : it certainly isn’t with the express purpose of impressing Ofsted but it certainly sometimes begins to feel like this. I thought it might be fun to toy with our own definition of ‘outstanding’ as a counterpoint - to Ofsted’s definition. Interestingly Ofsted themselves (or at least the incoming chief inspector) has started considering getting rid of the ‘outstanding grade’ in part because of schools’ unhealthy preoccupation with it. So here is my attempt at a definition of an outstanding institution- not a definitive one but I think it gets the point across:

1. Outstanding cannot be put into a list – it is far less tangible.

2. Outstanding would never describe itself as outstanding because it is too busy thinking about what else it could do.

3. Outstanding is by its very nature positive and constructive so it would avoid ‘categorising’ something as ‘outstanding.’

4. Outstanding is about courage and independence and fluidity of thought so it wouldn’t buy into others’ definitions of outstanding.

5. Outstanding is about all not just the few so it would hesitate to use a word like outstanding that raises the few over the many.

6. Outstanding is about education not schooling- for education read something that encourages lifelong learning as opposed to schooling which help pupils to jump through the next hoop and teachers to tick boxes to get an outstanding rating.

If you can think of any – I’d be very happy to hear them.

Have a glorious summer all of you!

**Information**

**Please remember previous::: ice-cream volunteers please::: fruit & veg for snacks:::no nuts :::collect lost property:::willow:::** **keep the hogs happy and safe:::** **Cecily Court car park::: security- please see again below:::Please don’t contact the office about clubs until the first Thursday:::**

**Communication--**

**Parent Calendar:** Apologies for the late change to the date for the Yr 6 leaver’s service- with the best will in the world this will sometimes happen—please know we will always contact you by text regarding any late changes- as we did here.

**Staffing next year**

We have a number of changes at the end of this term.

Miss Miles is coming back from maternity leave but will initially be on secondment working across our Trust, supporting teaching and learning in other schools. This is a great opportunity for her and for us.

Mrs Bond, Mrs Glover, Mrs Weinberger, Miss Morrison-Smith and Mrs O’Malley are all moving on at the end of this term. They have all made their mark on this place in a relatively short space of time – they have been great colleagues and the children have flourished under their guidance and support- we wish them all well for the future.

Miss McCarron and Mr Weinberger will be joining the Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 teams respectively, extending on the roles they already have in the school.

Learning News

**Report from Kenny Lynch: Chair of Governors**

On 13th July 2016 I met nine Subject Leaders covering all national curriculum subjects, except Music, which recently lost its lead and is in a period of planning.

The aim was to give them all the opportunity to explain to a non-expert ‘critical friend’:

• their priorities for the academic year

• their assessment of the impact of their priorities based on the evidence they have collected throughout the year; and

• what their priorities are for development of the teaching and learning in their Subject for next year

I provided a short verbal report to Head Teacher at the end of the morning and will provide a written report to the Leadership & Achievement Committee of the Local Governing Body.

I am delighted to say that I was very impressed with the work that is going on in the school and it was fantastic to hear about the impact of the new enhancement initiatives across the school, such as growth mindset, Philosophy for Children (P4C), talk partners. I also heard about some of the exciting plans for next year such as the book writing project with the new Patron of Reading, the work planned with the Minchinhampton Art Festival, the planned Multi Use Games Area (MUGA). I was able to highlight some useful areas for development in the presentation of the information, but in general the teachers did a great job.

*Kenny Lynch, Chair of Governors*

**A positive note from a member of the public**

‘I was at an open air matinee performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream at Berkeley Castle yesterday. Year 3 /4 pupils from Minchinhampton Primary School were also in the audience and I wanted to let you know how impressed myself and all other members of my party were with their behaviour. Their attentiveness and concentration during a full length Shakespeare play was particularly impressive given the incredible heat that day.

I must admit that initially my heart had sunk when i realised how many young children would be in the audience with me, but my fears were completely unfounded and in fact, seeing how the children responded to the actors and the play brought an extra element to the performance.

Thank you

***For future events and for a whole range of information about the school and its workings, please refer to the school website.***